

Welcome to America. May God bless Australia, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in Leutze Park at the Historical Washington Navy Yard. In his remarks, he referred to Janette Howard, wife of Prime Minister Howard; Adm. Vernon E. Clark, USN, Chief of Naval Operations; and Rear Adm. Christopher E. Weaver, USN, Commandant, Naval District of Washington. The President also referred to ANZUS, the Security Treaty Between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister John Howard.

Exchange With Reporters on Returning From the Washington Navy Yard

September 10, 2001

Prime Minister Howard's Visit

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us your thoughts, sir, on more tax cuts?

The President. I'm honored the Prime Minister is here. He's a great friend. Australia's a great friend, and we're so honored he's here. I'm sure we'll have a good, constructive visit. And we've had a great start.

Education

Q. Mr. President, what's your message on education today? Do you have anything to say about education today, Mr. President?

The President. In Florida.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:10 a.m. in the West Wing Lobby Entrance at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters Following Discussions With Prime Minister Howard

September 10, 2001

Australia-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Q. Mr. President, how do you feel about a free trade agreement with Australia?

The President. We've had a good discussion about it.

Q. Progress, sir?

The President. I think we've made some good progress; you bet. I appreciate the Prime Minister being here. Australia is a great friend to the United States, and it's an honor to welcome him and the delegation here.

Q. Does the agreement still have to wait until after the FDA here?

The President. We're making good progress. He's certainly making a good case.

Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, if you had to choose between education and your tax cut, which would you choose?

The President. I'm going to Florida today—

Q. Have fun.

The President. —to talk about education.

I hope the Australian press is kinder to you than the American press is to me.

Bush-Howard Discussions

Q. How have you found the discussions—

Prime Minister Howard. Dennis? You heard that, Dennis?

Q. Yes?

Prime Minister Howard. You just listen to the man. He speaks great common sense. [Laughter]

Q. Mr. Howard, how have you found the discussions so far with Mr. Bush?

Prime Minister Howard. Very good. I mean, we are very close friends. We covered just about everything you could cover in the time. We're going to continue over lunch to talk about some of the regional issues. And it's a great opportunity to reinforce what a deep friendship it is. And the President and I have a great similarity of views on many issues, and it's a great experience to be able to exchange them with somebody who holds the views he does.

Q. Have you provided an update on the—

Prime Minister Howard. I can't hear you; I'm sorry.

Q. Have you provided an update on the HMAS *Manoora* at all?

Prime Minister Howard. Haven't discussed it.